

## Message Text

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70

ACTION EUR-25

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FM AMEMBASSY BONN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3603

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: EAID

SUBJECT: PRESS SPECULATION ON POSSIBLE RESIGNATION  
OF FRG AID MINISTER EPPLER

1. ALL OF THE QUALITY DAILY GERMAN PRESS CARRY  
FRONT PAGE STORIES ON THE "FIRST GOVERNMENT CRISIS",  
THE POSSIBLE RESIGNATION OF AID MINISTER EPPLER DUE  
TO INTERNAL CABINET DISAGREEMENT .  
OVER THE AID MINISTRY BUDGET. ACCORDING TO THE PRESS  
THE THE DEBATE WITHIN THE CABINET FOCUSSES  
ON THE DESIRE OF FINANCE MINISTER APEL, REPORTEDLY  
WITH CHANCELLOR SCHMIDT'S SUPPORT, TO CUT THE 1975  
PROPOSED AID BUDGET INCREASED BY DM250 MILLION AND  
TO PLACE A DM3 BILLION CEILING ON AID EXPENDITURES  
BY 1977 INSTEAD OF THE PLANNED DM 5 BILLION LEVEL.  
ADDITIONAL ACCOUNTS MENTION THE DEBATE WITHIN THE  
CABINET OVER ANY FRG BUDGET CONTRIBUTION TO THE EC'S  
\$500 MILLION FOR THE UN EMERGENCY PROGRAM, NOTING  
THAT THE CHANCELLOR SPECIFICALLY REJECTED EPPLER'S  
INTENTION TO PROVIDE, IF NECESSARY, SOME FUNDS  
FROM HIS OWN BUDGET. THE GENERAL ANZEIGER REPORTS  
IN ITS JULY 3 EDITION THAT EPPLER HAD WRITTEN TO  
SCHMIDT ANNOUNCING HIS INTENTION TO RESIGN IN THE  
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EVENT AN ACCEPTABLE COMPROMISE IS NOT REACHED DURING THE

BUDGET DISCUSSION. WHILE ACKNOWLEDGING THE EXISTENCE OF THE LETTER THE AID MINISTRY HAS CLAIMED THE ANZEIGER ACCOUNT DOES NOT CORRESPOND TO THE FACTS, ALTHOUGH EPPLER HAS INDICATED HIS WILLINGNESS TO COMPROMISE ON A SMALLER REDUCTION FROM THE PROPOSED DM 250 MILLION. THE CABINET DEBATE ON THE BUDGET BEGINS ON THURSDAY ACCORDING TO THE FRANKFURTER ALLGEMEINE ZEITUNG.

2. NUMEROUS ACCOUNTS NOTE SCHMIDT'S PUBLIC COMMITMENT AT NAIROBI IN SEPTEMBER 1973, WHEN HE WAS FINANCE MINISTER, TO DOUBLE FRG GOVERNMENTAL DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE BY 1978 AND MOST ACCOUNTS POINT TO THE NEGATIVE INTERNATIONAL CONSEQUENCES ANY REDUCTION IN FRG AID DISBURSEMENT WOULD HAVE, PARTICULARLY ON THE LDC'S. IN THIS CONNECTION, THE CDU PAPER DIE WELT, IN AN EDITORIAL, CAUTIONS THE GOVERNMENT AGAINST ECONOMIZING IN THE WRONG PLACE BY NOTING THAT A REDUCTION IN FOREIGN AID EXPENDITURES MIGHT ENCOURAGE THIRD WORLD FORCES TO TAKE A HARDER LINE AGAINST INDUSTRIAL COUNTRIES.

3. POLITICAL SPECULATION IN BONN FOCUSSES ON THE IMPACT AN EPPLER RESIGNATION WOULD HAVE ON THE GOVERNMENT AND THE PARTY. AN FAZ EDITORIAL, WHILE NOTING THERE IS NO LOVE LOST BETWEEN EPPLER AND SCHMIDT DUE PARTICULARLY TO EPPLER'S STANDING IN THE PARTY, BELIEVES THAT AN EPPLER RESIGNATION WOULD STRAIN THE GOVERNMENT'S CREDIBILITY AND WOULD WEAKEN PARTY INFLUENCE ON THE CHANCELLOR.  
HILLENBRAND

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